

# Catholicity and Globalization in the light of the World Council of Churches' document "The Church: Towards a Common Vision" : a faith & order perspective

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## **Catholicity and Globalization in the Light of the World Council of Churches' Document "The Church: Towards a Common Vision". A Faith & Order Perspective**

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The aim of this essay is to indicate some of the ways in which the convergence text entitled *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, favourably received at the Tenth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 2013, resonates with themes taken up in the ongoing conversations concerning Catholicity and Globalization between representatives of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, the Old Catholic Church of the Union of Utrecht, the Episcopal Church and observers from the Church of Sweden. A symposium entitled "The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. An Ongoing Conversation on Catholicity and Globalization" was held on October 4–7, 2016 at Angels' Hills Conference Centre, Tagaytay, Philippines. Given the title of that gathering, the following remarks will not only highlight the similarity between Faith & Order's convergence on ecclesiology and the conversations on catholicity and globalization but will also conclude with some thoughts relating to the theme "The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace" chosen as the *leitmotif* guiding the work of the World Council in the years ahead.

Faith & Order's *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* has been hailed as an important advance in addressing what some would call the most difficult point of contention dividing Christians from one another, that is, the nature and structure of the church.<sup>1</sup> In his contribution to the

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<sup>1</sup> The text is available in various languages at: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/the-church-towards-a-common-vision> (accessed 29.12.2016). A few of the many publications which offer an analysis of this convergence statement include the entire second issue of *The Ecumenical Review* 65 (2013), as well as: Geoffrey Wainwright, "The Church: In and For the World": A Wesleyan and Methodist Reading of the WCC Faith and Order Convergence Document "The Church: Towards a Common Vision", <http://oimts.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/2013-6-wainwright.pdf> (accessed 29.12.2016); Odair Pedroso Mateus, 'The Making of an Ecumenical Text: An Introduction to "The Church: Towards a Common Vision"', [http://www.academia.edu/15219332/The\\_Making\\_of\\_an\\_Ecumenical\\_Text\\_An\\_Introduction\\_to\\_The\\_](http://www.academia.edu/15219332/The_Making_of_an_Ecumenical_Text_An_Introduction_to_The_)

*Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* entitled “Church,” the well-known Methodist ecumenist Geoffrey Wainwright listed eight different and unreconciled “ecclesiologies” held by the various families of churches, which seem to justify their divisions from one another.<sup>2</sup> It is no surprise, therefore, that shortly after its foundation in 1948, the World Council of Churches felt the need to state unambiguously that membership in the council required no agreement about the nature, structure and mission of the church.<sup>3</sup> Nor is it any surprise that, sixty-three years later, the leaders of the Faith & Order commission would claim that “the convergence reached in *The Church* represents an extraordinary ecumenical achievement,” precisely because it seems to uncover substantial agreement on some of the most fundamental aspects of ecclesiology.<sup>4</sup> Does this convergence statement on ecclesiology display substantial agreement with the ecclesiological reflection generated by the ongoing conversation on catholicity and globalization?

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Church\_Towards\_a\_Common\_Vision\_ (accessed 29.12.2016); Susan Durber, ‘Looking for the Church: Reflections on Towards a Common Vision’, and John Hind, ‘“That Wonderful and Sacred Mystery.” A Reflection on The Church: Towards a Common Vision’, both available at [http://www.oneinchrist.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/One-in-Christ-vol.47.no.\\_2.2013pdf.pdf](http://www.oneinchrist.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/One-in-Christ-vol.47.no._2.2013pdf.pdf) (accessed 29.12.2016); John Gibaut, ‘Una visione di Chiesa’, *Il Regno – Attualità* 58 (2013) 204–206; Teresa Rossi, ‘Una comune comprensione della Chiesa’, *Studi ecumenici* 32 (2014) 13–18; William Henn, ‘The Church: Toward a Common Vision (2013). The New Ecclesiological Text from the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC’, *Studi ecumenici* 32 (2014) 19–43; Brian P. Flanagan, ‘Catholic Appropriation and Critique of *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*’, *One in Christ* 49 (2015) 219–234; Mary Tanner, ‘The Church: Towards a Common Vision. A Faith and Order Perspective’, *One in Christ* 49 (2015) 171–181; Joan Patricia Back, ‘La Chiesa: verso una visione comune’, *Nuova Umanità* 38 (2016) 11–25. – At times, I will refer to *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* with the simplified title *The Church*; in the footnotes I will refer to it with the abbreviation TCTCV.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright, ‘Church’, in: Nicholas Lossky et al. (eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 2002), 176–186.

<sup>3</sup> See the ‘Toronto Statement’ of 1950, available at <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/1950/toronto-statement> (accessed 13.09.2013). Its content is nicely summarized by Morris West, ‘Toronto Statement’, in: Lossky et al. (eds), *Dictionary* (as note 2), 1137–1139.

<sup>4</sup> John Gibaut/Vasilios of Constantia-Ammochostos, ‘Preface’, in *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (Faith and Order Paper 214; Geneva: WCC Publications, 2013), viii.

Before trying to answer that question, a word of caution is advisable. *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* did not intend to take up in depth the precise issues which were the focus of the discussions on catholicity and globalization. For one thing, the work that led to the Faith & Order convergence text began in earnest after the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order held in Santiago de Compostela in 1993, thirteen years prior to the beginning of the conversations on catholicity and globalization in 2006. Moreover, Faith & Order's work on ecclesiology intended not to explore in depth any single aspect of the nature, structure, and mission of the church, but to gather together the ecclesiological convergences which were emerging from the responses by the various churches to its famous text *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* of 1982, most of which were published in six volumes between 1986 and 1988. An analysis of these responses led to the conclusion that there were at least six areas in which one could discern a substantial agreement among most Christian communities: the role of the church in God's saving purpose; the church as a communion (*koinonia*); the church as generated by the preaching of the Word of God (*creatura verbi*); the church as mystery or sacrament of God's love for the world; the church as the pilgrim people of God; the church as prophetic sign and servant of God's coming kingdom.<sup>5</sup> These themes formed the basis of a preliminary study document entitled *The Nature and Purpose of the Church* (1998),<sup>6</sup> to which responses from the churches were elicited. These responses led to a second draft – *The Nature and Mission of the Church* (2005).<sup>7</sup> Substantial reactions to this new, revised draft came from a plenary meeting of the Faith & Order commission held in Crete in 2009 and an inter-Orthodox symposium held in Cyprus in 2011, along with contributions from churches, ecumenical organizations, academic institutions, and individuals.

The constructive criticisms that were garnered from these various responses led to substantial revisions, resulting in the convergence text of 2013, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*. It has four chapters. The first and last are shorter chapters that deal with the origin and place of the

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Baptism, Eucharist & Ministry 1982–1990: Report on the Process and Responses* (Faith and Order Paper 149; Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990), 148–151.

<sup>6</sup> *The Nature and Purpose of the Church, A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement* (Faith and Order Paper 181; Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> *The Nature and Mission of the Church, A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement* (Faith and Order Paper 198; Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005).

church in God's design for the salvation of the world (chapter one) and with some specific aspects of the church's service in and for the world (chapter four). As such, these two chapters address the role of the Christian community towards the world around it – *ad extra*. The second and third chapters, instead, are more internally directed, with the second chapter emphasizing how much Christians are in agreement concerning the church, especially in the light of scripture and the tradition prior to church divisions, while the third chapter addresses ecclesiological issues that have been divisive in the past and describes some of the progress in resolving those issues through theological dialogue. Given the overall flow of the document, therefore, one could expect that passages relating to catholicity would appear mainly in the middle chapters, especially in chapter two, while convergences about the Christian response to situations of evil in human society, such as those caused by imperialist globalization, would appear in chapters one and four. In fact, this turns out to be true.

### 1. “Catholicity” according to *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*

A good point of departure for considering catholicity within this convergence document can be found already in its second paragraph, which quotes the final words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, mandating that his followers “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:18), and recalls his words of farewell at the beginning of Acts, telling the apostles to be his witnesses “in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).<sup>8</sup> The sense of catholicity as a universal outreach is seen in the divine initiative establishing the church: “As a divinely established communion, the Church belongs to God and does not exist for itself. It is by its very nature missionary, called and sent to witness in its own life to that communion which God intends for all humanity and for all creation in the kingdom.”<sup>9</sup> The Faith & Order text does not shy away from admitting faults in carrying out this mission:

At times, the cultural and religious heritage of those to whom the Gospel was proclaimed was not given the respect it deserved, as when those engaging in evangelization were complicit in imperialistic colonization, which pillaged and even exterminated peoples (...). Notwithstanding such tragic events,

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<sup>8</sup> TCTCV, 2.

<sup>9</sup> TCTCV, 13.

God's grace, more powerful than human sinfulness, was able to raise up true disciples and friends of Christ in many lands and establish the Church within the rich variety of many cultures.<sup>10</sup>

One can see already in this passage that its authors saw a connection between the positive value of a mission of evangelization extending to the whole world and the temptation, not always resisted, of a kind of global outreach that could take the evil form of imperialistic colonization.

The same paragraph of *The Church* goes on to speak of the first great Christian missionary, the apostle Paul, as offering a positive way of presenting the Gospel message within the wide range of various cultural settings.

St Paul's preaching of Christ in the Areopagus at Athens (Acts 17:22–34), making use of local beliefs and literature, illustrates how the very first generation of Christians attempted to share the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection, drawing upon and, when necessary, transforming, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the cultural heritage of their listeners and serving as a leaven to foster the well-being of the society in which they lived.<sup>11</sup>

This thought sets the stage for one of the first appearances of the precise word "catholicity" within the text:

Legitimate diversity is not accidental to the life of the Christian community but is rather an aspect of its catholicity, a quality that reflects the fact that it is part of the Father's design that salvation in Christ be incarnational and thus "take flesh" among the various peoples (...).<sup>12</sup>

A "theological" description of catholicity appears when *The Church* describes the ecclesial marks enumerated in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. The third note is described as follows:

The Church is catholic because of the abundant goodness of God "who desires everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4). Through the (...) power of God, the Church's mission transcends all barriers and proclaims the Gospel to all peoples. Where the whole mystery of Christ is present, there too is the Church catholic (cf. Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Smyrneans*, 6), as in the celebration of the eucharist. The essential catholicity of the Church is undermined when cultural and other differences are allowed to develop into division. Christians are called to remove all obstacles

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<sup>10</sup> *TCTCV*, 6.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *TCTCV*, 12.

to the embodiment of this fullness of truth and life bestowed upon the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>13</sup>

The reference in this passage to the eucharist is particularly relevant to the conversations on catholicity and globalization, insofar as those discussions moved explicitly towards an eucharistic conception of catholicity. The “Good Shepherd Report,” which those conversations produced in 2007, pointed out that its

(...) ecclesiological understanding is grounded in the generosity and abundance of the Eucharist, for that is the focal point of our catholicity. As we all eat from the one loaf that is our Lord’s body and drink from the one cup that holds his blood, we become one with one another and with him. As we share his life, his suffering, and his death, we also share the life, suffering, and death of our catholic brothers and sisters – wherever they live, whoever they are, whatever their sin and virtue. We are bound in special solidarity with those with whom we share the Eucharist.<sup>14</sup>

The Faith & Order convergence text integrates its theological description of catholicity with qualities which are “contextual,” “cultural,” and “empirical.”

Legitimate diversity in the life of communion is a gift from the Lord. The Holy Spirit bestows a variety of complementary gifts on the faithful for the common good (cf. 1 Cor 12:4–7). The disciples are called to be fully united (cf. Acts 2:44–47; 4:32–37), while respectful of and enriched by their diversities (1 Cor 12:14–26). Cultural and historical factors contribute to the rich diversity within the Church. The Gospel needs to be proclaimed in languages, symbols and images that are relevant to particular times and contexts so as to be lived authentically in each time and place.<sup>15</sup>

Two consequences flow from this understanding of the legitimate diversity which is an essential dimension of the catholicity of the church. One concerns the importance of the local church and its right and obligation to exhibit its own distinctive characteristics: “Through shared faith in Christ, expressed in the proclamation of the Word, the celebration of the sacra-

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<sup>13</sup> TCTCV, 22.

<sup>14</sup> ‘The Good Shepherd Report’, in: Marsha L. Dutton with Emily K. Stuckey (eds), *Globalization and Catholicity. Ecumenical Conversations on God’s Abundance and the People’s Need* (Beiheft zu IKZ 100; Bern: Stämpfli, 2010), 162–166: 164. The Bishop Ramento Statement is also very eucharistic, its subtitle being “A Eucharistic Vision for a Globalized World”, *ibid.*, 237–242: 237.

<sup>15</sup> TCTCV, 28.

ments and lives of service and witness, each local church is in communion with the local churches of all places and all times.”<sup>16</sup> This leads to another explicit description of catholicity: “Catholicity, as described in the baptismal catechesis of Cyril of Jerusalem, refers not simply to geographic extension but also to the manifold variety of local churches and their participation in the fullness of faith and life that unites them in the one *koinonia*.”<sup>17</sup>

A second consequence concerns the means for maintaining unity with legitimate diversity. In the course of history and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Christian community has developed ways of maintaining that unity in diversity which is essential to its catholicity.

Issues concerning unity and diversity have been a principal concern since the Church discerned, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, that Gentiles were to be welcomed into communion (cf. Acts 15:1–29; 10:1–11:18). The letter addressed from the meeting in Jerusalem to the Christians in Antioch contains what might be called a fundamental principle governing unity and diversity: “For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials” (Acts 15:28). (...) Christians are called not only to work untiringly to overcome divisions and heresies but also to preserve (...) their legitimate differences of liturgy, custom and law and to foster legitimate diversities of spirituality, theological method and formulation in such a way that they contribute to the unity and catholicity of the Church as a whole.<sup>18</sup>

The process of discernment needed to maintain unity in diversity benefits from the participation of all. No one is to be excluded. At the same time, individual leaders, even in the current state of division among the churches, have been able to speak out on various issues – often concerning social problems – in a way that has been an inspiration to the Christian community as a whole:

Decision-making in the Church seeks and elicits the consensus of all and depends upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit, discerned in attentive listening to God’s Word and to one another. By the process of active reception over time, the Spirit resolves possible ambiguities in decisions.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *TCTCV*, 29.

<sup>17</sup> *TCTCV*, 31.

<sup>18</sup> *TCTCV*, 30.

<sup>19</sup> *TCTCV*, 51. The passage goes on to mention Bishop Desmond Tutu’s insistence on the importance of Christian collaboration against apartheid, Patriarch Bartholomew’s promotion of ecology, the Assisi gatherings to pray for peace initiated by



Catholicity is a quality of the church and the Faith & Order convergence text on ecclesiology includes a number of themes which are quite congenial to its understanding in the ongoing conversations on catholicity and globalization. To summarize, catholicity is a consequence of the design of the Father that salvation in Jesus Christ be offered universally to all human beings, no matter where they live. The mission of evangelization must respect the values of various peoples and their cultures. The worldwide communion of local churches is rich in diversity and has from the beginning made use of means to maintain that unity which respects legitimate variety, even though at times spreading the joyful good news has been marred by error, such as collusion with imperialism. Does *The Church* address globalization, especially in its evil effects that have been pointed out in recent discussions between our churches?

## 2. “Globalization” in *The Church*?

The aim of *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* was to express the degree of ecclesiological agreement that already exists between currently divided Christian communities and to encourage yet further convergence, not to analyze particular problems which human beings face in today’s world. Thus, a striking difference between the Faith & Order text and the conversations on catholicity and globalization is that the very word “globalization” does not appear in *The Church*. Nevertheless, many of its passages touch upon the response by the Christian community to the kinds of social questions addressed in the catholicity and globalization conversations. The opening chapter of *The Church* highlights the fact that the very existence of the Christian community is related to God’s plan to heal a world which, created good, has been deformed by human sin.

God’s purpose in creation was thwarted by human sin and disobedience (cf. Gen. 3–4; Rom. 1:18–3:20), which damaged the relationship between God, human beings and the created order. (...). The dynamic history of God’s restoration of *koinonia* found its irreversible achievement in the incarnation and paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. The Church (...) acts by the power of the Holy Spirit to continue his life-giving mission in prophetic and compassionate ministry and so participates in God’s work of healing a broken world.<sup>20</sup>

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Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI, and Br. Roger Schutz’s ministry of promoting liturgical prayer and fraternity at Taizé and throughout the world.

<sup>20</sup> *TCTCV*, 1.

An important aspect of recent discussions concerning globalization among our churches has been precisely to look at the injustice and damage caused on less economically developed populations by that process. Here the mission of the church is described precisely as responding to the call to participate in “God’s work of healing a broken world.”

The life-giving mission of the church is further related to the example of Jesus, by means of a quotation from a text from another department of the World Council of Churches – the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism.

The mission of the Church ensues from the nature of the Church as the body of Christ, sharing in the ministry of Christ as Mediator between God and his creation. At the heart of the Church’s vocation in the world is the proclamation of the kingdom of God inaugurated in Jesus the Lord, crucified and risen. Through its internal life of eucharistic worship, thanksgiving, intercessory prayer, through planning for mission and evangelism, through a daily lifestyle of solidarity with the poor, through advocacy even to confrontation with the powers that oppress human beings, the churches are trying to fulfil this evangelistic vocation.<sup>21</sup>

Solidarity with the poor and confronting oppressive powers are here identified as the heart of the Church’s vocation.

This theme is most strongly emphasized in chapter four of the statement, which is entitled “The Church: In and For the World,” and which most directly concerns the church’s activity in society.

The reason for the mission of Jesus is succinctly expressed in the words, “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son” (John 3:16). Thus the first and foremost attitude of God towards the world is love, for every child, woman and man who has ever become part of human history and, indeed, for the whole of creation. The kingdom of God, which Jesus preached by revealing the Word of God in parables and inaugurated by his mighty deeds (...), is the final destiny of the whole universe. The Church was intended by God, not for its own sake, but to serve the divine plan for the transformation of the world. Thus, service (*diakonia*) belongs to the very being of the Church.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> TCTCV, 4. These words are a quotation from ‘Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation’, in: Jacques Matthéy (ed.), *You are the Light of the World. Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980–2005* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005), 8.

<sup>22</sup> TCTCV, 58.

Faith & Order is claiming that an inalienable dimension of the church's mission is to serve that transformation; such service belongs to her very being.

The world that "God so loved" is scarred with problems and tragedies which cry out for the compassionate engagement of Christians. The source of their passion for the transformation of the world lies in their communion with God in Jesus Christ. (...). The Church needs to help those without power in society to be heard; at times it must become a voice for those who are voiceless. Precisely because of their faith, Christian communities cannot stand idly by in the face of natural disasters which affect their fellow human beings (...). Faith also impels them to work for a just social order, in which the goods of this earth may be shared equitably, the suffering of the poor eased and absolute destitution one day eliminated. (...). As followers of the "Prince of Peace," Christians advocate peace, especially by seeking to overcome the causes of war (principal among which are economic injustice, racism, ethnic and religious hatred, exaggerated nationalism, oppression and the use of violence to resolve differences). (...) These are obligations on churches as much as on individual believers. Each context will provide its own clues to discern what is the appropriate Christian response within any particular set of circumstances.<sup>23</sup>

The Christian response to the challenges facing human beings today will entail a certain preferential option for those who suffer:

The Church is comprised of all socio-economic classes; both rich and poor are in need of the salvation that only God can provide. After the example of Jesus, the Church is called and empowered in a special way to share the lot of those who suffer and to care for the needy and the marginalized. The Church proclaims the words of hope and comfort of the Gospel, engages in works of compassion and mercy (cf. Luke 4:18–19) and is commissioned to heal and reconcile broken human relationships and to serve God in the ministry of reconciling those divided by hatred or estrangement (cf. 2 Cor 5:18–21).<sup>24</sup>

One can find in *The Church* also an insistence upon the imperative for believers to care for the environment, created by God: "Together with all people of goodwill, the Church seeks to care for creation, which groans to share in the freedom of the children of God (cf. Rom. 8:20–22), by opposing the abuse and destruction of the earth and participating in God's healing of broken relationships between creation and humanity."<sup>25</sup> The final

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<sup>23</sup> *TCTCV*, 64.

<sup>24</sup> *TCTCV*, 66.

<sup>25</sup> *TCTCV*, 66; see also 59.

paragraph of *The Church* looks forward to the fulfilment of the promise of a new heavens and a new earth, with which the New Testament closes:

“God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (John 3:17). The New Testament ends with the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, transformed by the grace of God (cf. Rev. 21:1–22:5). This new cosmos is promised for the end of history but is already present in an anticipatory way even now as the Church, (...) calls out in love and worship “Come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20). Christ loves the Church as the bridegroom loves his bride (cf. Eph. 5:25) and, until the wedding feast of the lamb in the kingdom of heaven (cf. Rev. 19:7), shares with her his mission of bringing light and healing to human beings until he comes again in glory.<sup>26</sup>

The foregoing passages may be seen as expressive of another theme that has emerged in the conversations on catholicity and globalization – the “ethical” dimension of Christian discipleship. Peter-Ben Smit has written:

(...) “catholicity” provides a theologically and ethically qualified way to speak about ecclesial accompaniment and thus brings to the fore the practical and ethical aspects of being the church in a full, catholic sense. Notions such as “ethics,” “ecclesiology,” and even “salvation” all appear to be closely interrelated. All of this seems to suit the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace well, given that the Unity Statement, as it was adopted by the Busan assembly, as well as *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, as it was prepared for the assembly, also challenge the churches themselves to develop a life (...) of justice and peace, which are, again, qualities that are part of being catholic, a theological term that indicates the root of this pilgrimage and of these qualities, that is participation in Christ, or following Christ.<sup>27</sup>

While dealing not so much with the church’s service in and for the world – which is the focus of chapter four of *The Church* – the third chapter of the convergence text includes several affirmations relating the sacraments to the Christian commitment to work for a better world.

Just as the confession of faith and baptism are inseparable from a life of service and witness, so too the eucharist demands reconciliation and sharing by all those who are brothers and sisters in the one family of God. “Christians are called in the eucharist to be in solidarity with the outcast and to become

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<sup>26</sup> TCTCV, 69.

<sup>27</sup> Peter-Ben Smit, ‘Imagining a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. Catholicity and Contextuality’, *The Ecumenical Review* 66 (2014) 214–225: 223–224.

signs of the love of Christ who lived and sacrificed himself for all and now gives himself in the eucharist ... .”<sup>28</sup>

Leadership in the area of social action is one of the tasks of those ordained to the service of oversight: “Such guidance includes the oversight of the various Christian service organizations dedicated to bettering human life and to the relief of suffering, aspects of the Church’s service (*diakonia*) to the world (...).”<sup>29</sup> Of course, as centuries of experience have shown, prophetic criticism and opposition to forces of injustice usually lead to an often violent counter-reaction by those forces. The cross of Christ continues to be part of the destiny of his church.

The explicit call of Jesus that his disciples be the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world” (cf. Matt 5:13–16) has led Christians to engage with political and economic authorities in order to promote the values of the kingdom of God, and to oppose policies and initiatives which contradict them. This entails critically analyzing and exposing unjust structures, and working for their transformation, but also supporting initiatives of the civil authorities that promote justice, peace, the protection of the environment and the care for the poor and the oppressed.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps the best way to conclude this presentation of how *The Church* resonates with the ongoing conversations on catholicity and globalization is with some words from its conclusion.

The liturgy, especially the celebration of the eucharist, serves as a dynamic paradigm for what such *koinonia* looks like in the present age. (...) St John Chrysostom spoke about two altars: one in the Church and the other among the poor, the suffering and those in distress. Strengthened and nourished by the liturgy, the Church must continue the life-giving mission of Christ in prophetic and compassionate ministry to the world and in struggle against every form of injustice and oppression, mistrust and conflict created by human beings.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> TCTCV, 43. The words in quotation marks are from the section ‘Eucharist’ of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Printing (Faith and Order Paper 111; Geneva: WCC Publications, 2007), 14–15 (para. 21 and 26).

<sup>29</sup> TCTCV, 52.

<sup>30</sup> TCTCV, 65. See also TCTCV, 19: “The whole people of God is called to be a prophetic people, bearing witness to God’s word; a priestly people, offering the sacrifice of a life lived in discipleship; and a royal people, serving as instruments for the establishment of God’s reign. All members of the Church share in this vocation.”

<sup>31</sup> TCTCV, 67.

As mentioned earlier, the conversations on catholicity and globalization have sought to develop “A Eucharistic Vision for a Globalized World.”<sup>32</sup> These words from Faith & Order’s conclusion illustrate what seems to be a profound affinity between its message about the obligations of the church in human society and the reflections concerning globalization that have emerged during the discussions which have been taking place in recent years between representatives of the four churches mentioned at the beginning of this essay.

### 3. Conclusion

As is well known, the word “catholicity” intends to express the condition of being “according to the whole,” as derived from the Greek words “kath holou.”<sup>33</sup> As such, it was quite reasonable for the Iglesia Filipina Independiente and the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht, along with several other partners, to reflect upon whether the traditional use of the word “catholic” for the Church of Jesus Christ, first appearing at the beginning of the second century, could possibly serve as a corrective to the injustice that has accompanied another phenomenon of recent history – the phenomenon of “globalization.” This latter has plagued the populations of some nations by those in control of the levers of economic decision-making. While both concepts connote a quality which reaches out to include the whole human family, the positive values of the traditional notion of catholicity can offer a Christian and Gospel alternative to those evils that have accompanied the contemporary process of globalization.

The conversations on catholicity and globalization have acknowledged that, while both concepts in some way suggest the idea of completeness or wholeness, each of them can be and has been understood in a variety of ways. The “Unity Statement” of October 3, 2015, from the Ramento Conference on Catholicity and Globalization, offers several descriptions of catholicity: it is “the full fruition of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic

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<sup>32</sup> See note 14 above.

<sup>33</sup> Wolfgang Beinert, *Um das dritte Kirchenattribut. Die Katholizität der Kirche im Verständnis der evangelisch-lutherischen und der römisch-katholischen Theologie der Gegenwart* (Essen: Ludgerus, 1964); idem, ‘Die Katholizität der Kirche’, in: Walter Baier et al. (eds), *Weisheit Gottes – Weisheit der Welt. Festschrift für Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger zum 60. Geburtstag* (St. Ottilien: Eos, 1987), 2 vols: vol. 2, 1021–1037; and Avery Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985).

church in the protection of life” and “the means to attain solidarity of the local churches with the universal church (...) founded on a deeper sense of solidarity with the poor, the downtrodden, the marginalized and the oppressed.”<sup>34</sup> While these words emphasize aspects of the church which are relevant to its activity in society, this view has roots in the understanding of catholicity within the early Church.<sup>35</sup> Although “globalization” can have various positive meanings, the “Unity Statement” focuses upon the negative reality of “imperialist globalization,” that is, “the current condition of the preeminence of neoliberal globalization and the hegemony of empire,” with its structures that prevent “the full realization of one’s personhood as defined in the Gospel,” perpetuating such evils as the “landlessness of the peasants, the violation of labor rights, the neglect of migrant workers, the oppression and commodification of women and children, the displacement of indigenous communities, the absence of education and health services to needy communities, the destruction of (...) the environment,” and “the concentration of wealth and resources in the hands of the few.”<sup>36</sup> When considered in this way, catholicity and globalization are obviously in direct opposition to one another.

The present essay has shown that the recent convergence text on ecclesiology – *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* – understands catholicity first and foremost as an effect of the boundless love of God. The *missio Dei* extends to all peoples and Christ instituted the Church to share in this mission. The Church does not exist for itself (para. 13); it was intended not for its own sake but to serve the divine plan for the transformation of the world (para. 58). This mission is to respect those to whom the Gospel is proclaimed and the good values inherent in their cultures, despite the fact that sometimes missionaries have not always shown such respect. It brings about local churches (para. 31), rich in their legitimate diversities (para. 29), which are sustained together in communion through structures of participation and decision-making (para. 30 and 51). This communion is symbolized and celebrated in a special way in the eucharist (para. 22 and 66). All of these traits are in sharp contrast to a process of globalization that is oppressive and imperialist. The Faith & Order convergence identi-

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<sup>34</sup> ‘Unity Statement. Ramento Conference on Catholicity and Globalization’, 1 (unpublished). The statement adds that catholicity is expressive of “faith based on justice, the pursuit of peace and the integrity of creation.”

<sup>35</sup> See Smit, ‘Imagining a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace’ (as note 27).

<sup>36</sup> Also: ‘Unity Statement’ (as note 34), 2.

fies efforts to promote justice, peace, and the protection of the environment (para. 4, 58, 64, and 66) as the vocation of the Church, expressive of her very being.

Mary Tanner, who served as the moderator of the Faith & Order Commission during its fifth World Conference, which kicked off the twenty-year process that produced *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, wrote of it:

It is striking that Faith and Order's compelling vision is not of a self-absorbed Church turned in on itself, interested in its own organization and structure, but, rather, a Church living in the life of God, facing outwards in service to the needs of the world, proclaiming the good news, and working for justice and peace for all.<sup>37</sup>

The comments provided here from and about *The Church* clearly show a strong affinity and agreement with the ongoing conversations on catholicity and globalization, as one can verify by consulting the recently published collection of some of the important contributions and results of those talks.<sup>38</sup>

The meeting at the Angels' Hills Conference Center in the fall of 2016 sought to relate its reflection on catholicity and globalization to the World Council of Churches' pilgrimage of justice and peace. The Secretary General of the WCC, Olav Fykse Tveit, has noted that the convergence document *The Church* can also be read in light of that pilgrimage:

We are called to go out to those who need us (...). In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (...) on 24 November 2013, Pope Francis gave his church, and also other churches, a way forward in this regard. The text is an inspiration to shift the perspective of the church and its work to a more outward-looking, outward-going focus: first of all in how to share the gospel and its values and joy in a world in so much need of justice, peace, forgiveness, reconciliation, and care. (...) His message corresponds both to the understanding of the mission of the church expressed in the WCC mission state-

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<sup>37</sup> Mary Tanner, 'The Church: Towards a Common Vision – Ecumenical Breakthrough and Ecumenical Hope', in: Donald Bolen et al. (eds), *Towards Unity. Ecumenical Dialogue 500 Years after the Reformation* (Toronto: Novalis Publishing, 2017), 70–81: 74.

<sup>38</sup> See Dutton (ed.), *Globalization and Catholicity* (as note 14); the table of contents to this issue is available at [http://www.ikz.unibe.ch/inhalt\\_aktuell.html](http://www.ikz.unibe.ch/inhalt_aktuell.html) (accessed 29.12.2016).



ment, and to the shared understanding in the Faith and Order text on ecclesiology, describing the church in mission together, serving the world together.<sup>39</sup>

For his part, Peter-Ben Smit has shown that the conversations between the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, the Old Catholic Church of the Union of Utrecht, the Episcopal Church and observers from the Church of Sweden give a very concrete expression to what the pilgrimage of justice and peace might look like, offering as it were a paradigm for the pilgrimage.<sup>40</sup> His article concludes with five convergences between the consultations on catholicity and globalization and the WCC's Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace: 1) both are emphatically ecclesial and based upon the witness of the early church; 2) both are better understood through the lens of the double nature of catholicity as both quantitative and qualitative; 3) both call for a particular quality of life and an interrelation with other Christian communities; 4) both share an understanding of the church as an eucharistic community; and 5) both point to the fact that the particular "catholic" quality of the pilgrimage cannot be considered as optional.

Thus there is a very encouraging convergence between the WCC's Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, Faith & Order's convergence text *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* and the work of the ongoing conversations on catholicity and globalization. That these three current developments are taking place now simultaneously is, in my view, yet another sign that the Holy Spirit – the Lord and giver of life – is still very much active and breathing life into the ecumenical movement today!

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<sup>39</sup> Olav Fykse Tveit, 'The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace', *The Ecumenical Review* 66 (2014) 123–134: 129.

<sup>40</sup> See Smit, 'Imagining a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace' (as note 27), 214–215.

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### *Zusammenfassung*

Dieser Beitrag umreißt die Bedeutung des 2013 erschienenen Konvergenztextes «The Church: Towards a Common Vision» der Kommission für Glauben und Kirchenverfassung des Ökumenischen Rats der Kirchen (ÖRK) und dessen Entstehungsprozess. Der Artikel dokumentiert, wie sehr in verschiedenen Abschnitten dieses Textes die Auffassungen von «Katholizität» und «Globalisierung» nachhallen, wie sie in den Gesprächen zwischen der Iglesia Filipina Independiente, den Altkatholischen Kirchen der Utrechter Union, der Episcopal Church und Beobachtern der Kirche von Schweden verstanden wurden. Schliesslich setzt der Artikel diese Gespräche und den Text der Kommission für Glauben und Kirchenverfassung mit «Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace», die im Herbst 2013 bei der 10. Generalversammlung des ÖRK in Busan (Südkorea) behandelt wurde, ins Verhältnis.

### *Key Words – Schlüsselwörter*

Faith & Order – Ecclesiology – Mission of the Church – Catholicity & Globalization – Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace